Daimler und Benz
Stiftung

Promotion of cooperation between German and African research institutions with the "Ladenburger Horizonte" funding line 2027

With its "Ladenburg Horizons" funding line, the Daimler and Benz Foundation is promoting cooperation between German and African research institutions with a budget of up to €300,000. Independent research group leaders – professors, junior professors, "Habilitanden" (candidates for lecturing positions), and postdocs – at public institutions such as universities or at non-profit non-university research institutions in Germany are eligible to apply.

1. Motivation

In view of the increasing significance of African countries and their scientific potential, the Daimler and Benz Foundation is promoting cooperation between German and African research institutions. Scientists from such institutions in Germany which already maintain or would like to establish contacts with African partners are invited to apply for funding.

2. Focus of call for applications

For a joint research project, independent research group leaders who are in permanent or temporary employment at a university or non-profit non-university research institution in Germany for the entire duration of the project can apply for funding of up to €300,000 for a period of three years. In addition to professors, junior professors and "Habilitanden," applications can also be made by scientists who have completed their doctorates and have experience in leadership. In particular, this group includes postdoctoral researchers who are at an advanced stage of their scientific careers and already lead their own research groups. The application must clearly indicate the current status of the applicant and explicitly state his or her leadership role – for example as it appears on the website of the applicant's institution of employment.

Funding is provided for projects between German research institutions and scientific establishments based in eastern, western, or sub-Saharan Africa. The countries Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and South Africa are not covered by this program.

Only one application may be submitted per applicant. However, an applicant may collaborate in a further project. Applications from African research institutions or from German establishments that do not conduct research themselves (e.g. associations or other such alliances) cannot be taken into consideration. The project applied for should be completed within a maximum period of three years.

Funding may only be requested for a clearly defined research project with a central research question. However, this call for applications does not focus on applications

a) in which the financing of equipment is the main focus (more than 30 % of the total requested costs),
b) for basic medical research and clinical trials,
c) which focus on establishing research, training, or advanced education structures, or on capacity-building (more than 10 % of total costs),
d) for visit programs (more than three weeks per year) for African scientists at German institutions or vice versa,
e) which serve solely to promote young researchers,
f) for which a significant portion of the funding is to cover travel expenses (more than 10 % of total costs),
g) with a duration of less than 2.5 years.

Consolidation of the cooperative arrangement within the framework of the activities initiated in the project after its completion is desirable and should be addressed in the application. No further funding can be provided by the Foundation after conclusion of the funding period.

If cooperation with more than one African partner is sought, the added value for the project should be soundly justified in view of the limited budget. Involvement of external partners such as NGOs, associations, or companies is possible, but no funds can be requested for these partners.

3. Use and accounting of the funds applied for

The funding must largely benefit the African partner – to at least 60 % of the total budget applied for. Funding may be requested for personnel and material resources and for local travel expenses, and to a limited extent for travel expenses in connection with mutual visits or brief sojourns by scientists at the participating institutions, as long as these amount to no more than three weeks per year. If the application clearly shows that the focus is on a research project, funding may also be requested to a limited extent for the establishment of structures (e. g. a laboratory) or for the training of scientists at the African research institution (max. 10 % of the total amount).

Remuneration of scientists and technical staff in Africa should be in accordance with local practice. Personnel costs in Germany must be calculated according to the rates of the German Research Foundation (DFG) or the collective agreements applying to the federal or state civil service. “Vollkostensätze” (full cost rates) or lump sums cannot be granted. The Foundation bases its approval of doctoral positions on the “Hinweise zur Bezahlung von Promovierenden” (Guidelines for the Payment of Doctoral Candidates; in German only) of the DFG and reserves the right to reduce funding in the event of deviation.

Remuneration cannot be provided for an applicant’s own position; likewise, overhead costs of the German or African research institution, costs for exemption from teaching duties, bench

fees, fees for permanently employed scientists, or costs for outlay typical of a research institution (publication costs, or consumables such as basic chemicals and office equipment etc.) cannot be covered.

In view of the Foundation's non-profit status, the total funds may only be transferred and accounted for via the third-party funding office of the German research institution where the applicant is employed. If an application is approved, the full funding amount will be transferred to the institution concerned, which is then responsible for forwarding the appropriate portion of the funds to the African partner and is obliged to provide evidence of their orderly use. A prerequisite for this is that this institution possesses its own legal capacity. The applicant should ensure that all necessary formal requirements are met prior to application.

4. Applications

Please submit your application online in a single PDF file by December 15, 2026 (https://www.daimler-benz-stiftung.de/en/format/ladenburg-horizons). The Foundation does not provide a template for this purpose, but the following formal requirements must be strictly adhered to:

a) The application may only be submitted in German or English.
b) The page margins must be at least 2 cm wide throughout.
c) A readily legible font and type size (e. g. Arial, at least 11 pt) and justified alignment must be used for the entire application.
d) Illustrations such as charts and photos must be of high resolution (no blurring) and of a clearly legible size. They must either be self-explanatory or accompanied by captions, which must likewise have a font size of at least 11 pt.

The application may only contain the following information in the specified order and with the numbers of pages indicated:

4.1 Name, institution, and contact details of the applicant (one person only) and of any further scientists or institutions involved in the research project (max. 3 A4 pages):

a) Details of further scientists participating in the research project must be provided in the form of a list.
b) If space allows, brief information may be added about the applicant or the other researchers participating in the project. Detailed CVs must not be attached under any circumstances.

4.2 Project title and description (max. 4 A4 pages):

a) The topic of the research project should be clearly evident from the project title; please do not use acronyms.
b) The project description must be preceded by an abstract of no more than half an A4 page stating the research question, while adhering to the four-page limit. The abstract should summarize the content of the research project and, in particular, outline its relevance.

c) The description of the research project must be written in language comprehensible to readers without specific knowledge of the subject matter.
d) References may be listed on additional pages.

4.3 Requested budget (max. 2 A4 pages):

a) Please provide a detailed list in tabular form of the expected costs for personnel, travel, and materials.
b) Please specify both the overall budget and the proportions to be allotted to the German and African partners respectively.

4.4 Further documents:

a) If the applicant institution is not a university or a state research establishment, the application must be accompanied by a valid certificate of exemption from corporate income tax, specifying the purpose as "promotion of science and research" in accordance with the German Tax Code. Institutions that do not possess this certification are not eligible to apply.
b) Declarations of intent may be attached to the application.
c) No further documents such as cover letters, CVs, publication lists, or tables of contents may be attached to the application.

5. Selection

Following submission, all applicants will receive prompt confirmation of receipt, which will be sent to the email address provided in the application. Applications will be assessed in comparison with the other project proposals submitted; where necessary, the Foundation will have individual applications reviewed externally. The decisions as to the award of funding will be made by the Executive Board and the management of the Foundation.

The Foundation endeavors to decide on the applications that are to receive funding as early as possible after the deadline. Depending on the number of applications submitted, however, this timeframe cannot be specified with any certainty.

6. Contact

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Marion Hartmann at the Foundation office:

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